line from Jogigopa to Barak Valley in Assam upto Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram by a new alignment along the southern part of Meghalaya have been received;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to take any action on these representations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) and (b) Some representations have been received from Members of Parliament and State Government for construction of a new BG line from Jogigopa to Silchar.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A survey for a new BG line from Jogigopa Bridge to Silchar (approximately 200 kms.) has been included in the Rilway Budget for 1994-95.

Modernisation of Railway Telecom Network

5778. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Railways have decided to modernise its telecom network along the electrified routes;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposed modernisation; and

(c) by when entire work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian Railways are modernising its telecom. network along the electrified routes. Overhead telecom. circuits are transferred on to the more reliable underground cable system. This also enables provision of additional telecom. circuits. Railway Electrification is a continuous process and the present work load is likely to be completed by March, 98, subject to availability of resources.

Interaction for better railway services

5779. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman, Railway Board has urged for better interaction between the road and railway transporters to provide better and more efficient services to the people:

(b) if so, whether a seminar on management and policy studies was held at New Delhi to discuss various improvements in rail services:

(c) if so, the details of the discussions held in the seminar; and

(d) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) and (b) An International seminar was organised under the aegis of International Union of Railways at New Delhi in Jan. '94. The main theme was "Importance of the Railways in the National Economy" During this Seminar , Chairman, Railway Board in his keynote address called for better interaction between Road and Rail transport to improve efficiency, customer service and optimise asset utilisation as some of the strategies.

(c) Discussions at this International Seminar focussed on the importance of Railwsys in the economy of nations. Various strategies for imporving the performance of the Railways were discussed. Cooperation

between different modes of transport was proposed as one of the major strategies for improving transport services.

(d) The seminar highlighted the financial viability of the railways in the face of deregulation, globalisation of trade and general reduction in financial support from the Government. The participants were exposed to new ideas which are being implemented in the other railway systems.

Announcement of schemes to assist Bhopal Gas Victims

5780. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Central Government had announced some schemes to help and assist Bhopal Gas victims;

(b) whether a 50 percent quota for employment was fixed for the gas victims in the Rail Coach Factory, Bhopal;

(c) whether it is also a fact that only 350 gas victims have so far been provided jobs in the factory;

(d) whether the full quota of 50 per cent fixed was not applied till now;

(e) what are the measures/steps being taken to fulfil the assurance of 50 per cent quota to be provided to the gas victims; and

(f) by when all the gas victims are likely to be provided jobs under the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF) : (a) and (b) 50% of vacancies in Group 'C' and 'D' against direct recruitment quota in Central Railway Carriage Repair Shop, Bhopal have been reserved for preferential appointment of the victims of Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

(c) to (e) The total direct recruitment in the Carriage Repair Shop, Bhopal has so far been 394; 50% of which works out to 197 against which 201 Gas Victims have been appointed and the quota of 50% has thus been filled up.

(f) The actual intake of the Gas Victims is dependent upon the total intake by way of direct recruitment. In order to continue the assistance to the Gas Victims, the currency of instructions for preferential appointment has been extended upto31-12-94.

News item regarding Global Reversion to railways

5781. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news report published in the Hindustan Times dated the 18th April, 1994 capationed "Global reversion to railways" saying that more and more Government's are diverting funds away from building roads and airports and enhancing investment in rail transport which is providing an economic boon to the regions involved;

(b) whether according to the Report even though freight traffic on rails in India has grown five fold in the past four decades, trucking is increasing so fast that the share of goods moved by train is actually warning and saying "In 1950, railways carried 89 per cent of the freight whereas in 1992 it was down to 51 per cent";

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what steps Government of India propose to take or have taken so far in this regard keeping in view that India's rail passenger traffic and freight demand are expected to swell by more than 150 per cent during the ninety and in 21st century, if so, what is the likely investment in this field?